

**Board of County Commissioners  
Leon County, Florida**

Attachment # 5  
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Date: September 22, 2003  
To: Board of County Commissioners  
From: Parwez Alam, County Administrator  
Subject: Follow-up to District 5 Community Meeting of September 10, 2003

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- Chairman Grippa called the meeting to order and requested a motion be made designating Commissioner Rackleff as the Chairman for his District meeting.
- **Commissioner Thaell moved, seconded by Commissioner Sauls, to elect Commissioner Rackleff as Chairman for the District 5 meeting. The motion carried 6-0, with Commissioner Proctor absent.**

**Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**

Mr. Lee Hartsfield, GIS Coordinator, introduced two students, Clint and Laura, from the Lincoln High School Fellowship of Christian Athletes Huddle, Clint explained what the purpose of FCA is and Laura lead the Commission in prayer, which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Commissioner Bob Rackleff.

**Presentation**

- Commissioner Rackleff, on behalf of the Board, presented Ms. Sharon Rousch, CEO of Capital Regional Medical Center (formerly Tallahassee Community Hospital), with a resolution in honor of the opening of the new hospital.

**Status Reports**

1. Update on the Community Redevelopment Area (CRA)

- Assistant County Administrator, Vince Long, explained what a CRA is, how a new CRA is created, and presented the County's objection/argument to the City of Tallahassee's proposed Downtown CRA. Issues addressed in the presentation include:
  - Defined a CRA - a geographically defined area (designated as such under the Community Redevelopment Act), exhibiting pervasive slum and blighted areas. A CRA is established for the purposes of utilizing statutorily permitted economic development tools within the CRA.
  - Illustrated through slides, that the Downtown Tallahassee area does not exhibit pervasive slum and blighted areas but rather consists of highly valued property (law firms, lobbyists' offices, restaurants) and will continue to be a prosperous area
  - Charter counties, as Leon, must approve CRAs, as the County did with the Frenchtown CRA. The Board voted 7-0 against the proposed Downtown Tallahassee CRA.
  - Loophole allows City to **expand** a CRA (expanding the Frenchtown CRA), without County approval.
  - The County will lose \$80 million over the 20-year period in property tax revenue. The County will have to raise the County millage rate and/or reduce the level of County services - library services, parks and recreation, law enforcement, emergency medical services, etc.

- The Board announced that there will be a Joint City/County CRA meeting on Monday, September 15<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m. in City Commission Chambers. The Board urged citizens to contact the City Commission and ask for an immediate halt to the approval of a Downtown CRA.
- There were no speakers on this item. The Board accepted the status report.

2. Update on Emergency Medical Services

- Assistant County Administrator, Vince Long, gave a summary of the County's decision to implement a County-run EMS department, that will be activated on January 1, 2004. Mr. Long focused on the positives of the County-run that includes:
  - a continued commitment to provide the highest level of service
  - increased emphasis on training of EMS professionals
  - expanded Advanced Life Support training for first responders to the scene in rural areas (i. e. EMS personnel, City of Tallahassee firefighters) to optimize ability to provide life-saving medical treatment
  - increased emphasis on outreach to the community (training citizens to be "first responders")
  - a commitment to transfer/hire TMH's employees who have knowledge and experience regarding EMS
  - secured a contract with Air Methods Corporation to provide air ambulance emergency medical and transport services at no cost to the community; Air Methods "LifeNet" service will be stationed at Tallahassee airport.
  - source of funding is a Municipal Services Taxing Unit (MSTU) of 0.5 mil for the first year of service, and a proposed reduction to 0.2 mil in future years.
  - There were no speakers on this item.
- Commissioner Thael stated that the upcoming budget, beginning October 1, 2003, will include \$875,000 for two branch libraries, in District 3 and District 5, which totals \$1.75 million. He stated that he supports libraries but he recommends not building the branch libraries this year and defer the construction for one or two years; the money could be used for Capital costs for the EMS - such as purchasing ambulances, etc., which would completely eliminate the MSTU tax next year for Emergency Medical Services.

3. Overview of the Fiscal Year 03/04 Operating and Capital Improvement Budget

- Alan Rosenzweig, Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), gave an overview of the FY 03/04 budget - the first budget prepared since Leon County became a Home Rule Charter County. There were handouts available to the public that provided an overview of property tax rates, tax savings and % of total budget assigned to each category of spending. For example, Public Safety, the largest category of spending, receives 32% of total budget. Highlights of the FY 03/04 Budget include:
  - The Fire Services MSTU and Water/Sewer Franchise Fee will be eliminated and replaced with the more equitable Public Services Tax (PST), which is charged to all users of public utilities.

- The Communications Service Tax (CST) will provide an additional \$1 million/per year in revenue that will be used for the purchase of flooded property and flood mitigation.
- The second year of the Senior Homestead Exemption provides \$414,000 in savings for seniors claiming the exemption (approx. 1,942).
- Increased funding for library services.
- Mr. Rosenzweig highlighted some Capital Projects planned and budgeted for District 5:
  - identify a site for Parkway Branch Library;
  - plan for expansion of J. R. Alford Arm for board walks, observation pier to be accomplished in the next 3-4 years;
  - the Regional Park planned for the land that is no longer used as landfill;
  - improvements and widening of Miccosukee Road.
- Commissioner Winchester explained that the FY03/04 budget includes the \$1.7 million for identifying the branch library sites - one in District 5 on Apalachee Parkway and one in the Canopy Oaks area, District 3. The Board will vote on the County's budget this month, which will include the budget for the branch libraries. Commissioner Winchester urged citizens to contact their Commissioners and specify their wishes as it relates to libraries.
- Mr. Joe Brown, Public Works, addressed the Buck Lake Road project. He explained that it consists of the following as described in a handout:
  - The project is estimated to cost \$7,500,000
  - Reconstruction of existing road to Pedrick Road
  - Intersection enhancements at Pedrick Road, Mahan Drive, Charlais Road and Highland Drive
  - Retrofit stormwater treatment for existing and added pavement
  - Stormwater facilities to be landscaped to enhance the community appearance
  - Preservation of Patriarch Oak tree at Buckwood entrance
  - Extend four-lane section and transition to two lanes at Davis Drive
    - Bike lanes on both sides of the road
    - Landscaped medians
    - Sidewalks on both sides of the road
    - Curb and gutter with piped drainage system (no open swales)
    - Enhanced landscaping of right-of-way where possible
  - Enhanced two-lane section from Davis to Pedrick
    - Bike lanes on both sides of the road
    - Sidewalks on both sides of the road
    - Curb and gutter with piped drainage system (no open swales)
    - Enhanced landscaping of right-of-way where possible
  - Intersection Improvements
    - Additional left turn lane at Mahan Drive
    - Left turn lanes at all approaches, Pedrick Road
    - Right turn lane from Buck Lake road onto Pedrick Road southbound
    - Enhanced signalization at Pedrick Road
  - Project Status: the design is complete; all necessary permits for construction to be issued soon; right-of-way acquisition in progress
  - Project Schedule: right-of-way acquisition to be completed by March 2004; bid and contract process to be completed by June 2004; construction to be completed by 2006.

### Citizens to be Heard

- Wakulla County Commissioner Leon Nettles - discussed the Sprayfield in Leon County and the adverse impacts on Wakulla County, particularly Wakulla Springs. He stated that his main concern was about a proposed 3,200-acre development to the south that is located in a watershed, which would involve 16 houses per acre if permitted. He also pointed out that there are a lot of underground wells in the corridor and water pollution was a threat. He also expressed concern regarding additional traffic and the strain that would be placed on Woodville Highway. He wanted to ensure that future construction was well planned.
- Commissioner Thael explained that the County is engaged in a major aquifer study on the south side of the County and the City of Tallahassee is also conducting a watershed aquifer study. The Northwest Florida Water Management District (NFWFMD), the USGS and DEP are also involved and using the science, the County will be able to identify the source of the pollutants. He also stated that there are strong indications that the City's Southeast Sprayfield is a culprit as well as the state of Georgia. The Board is continuing its efforts to persuade Georgia to not allow pollutant water to flow to Florida.
- Commissioner Rackleff advised that a large part of the Blueprint 2000 project would improve water quality and stop the degradation.
- Commissioner Thael stated that if the Sprayfield is causing pollution to the underground aquifer, the County might have to take a position in opposition to the renewal of the permit for the Spray field.
- Don Axelrad - pointed out that the sewage from Leon County and City of Tallahassee is being sent to the Southeast Sprayfield, which is located, just upstream from Wakulla Springs and Wakulla River. He stated that he is involved in the science of determining the pollution sources to Wakulla Springs and wanted to have some formality and cooperation in the process. He suggested that the five agencies involved in the process of determining the source of the pollution be given a time line for making a decision.
- **Commissioner Rackleff requested, again, an agenda item regarding establishing an Intergovernmental Committee, with Wakulla County and when will a meeting be scheduled.**

Staff: Public Services/Intergovernmental Affairs - Vince Long/Jennie Khoen

- Linda Euler explained that there is a team of "citizen scientists" who live and play in the area (Wakulla). She asked the Commission to formalize an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Wakulla County Commission, which she feels is important to exert on pressure on decision-makers in doing the right thing for downstream neighbors and protecting recreational areas in Wakulla County.
- Commissioner Rackleff stated that this is something that can be explored and advised that Mr. Parwez Alam, County Administrator would investigate the suggestion.

- **Commissioner Thael suggested that an agenda item reviewing the possibilities and legal issues be brought back as an agenda item in the near future. The Board directed staff prepare an agenda item.**

Staff: Public Services/Intergovernmental Affairs - Vince Long/Jennie Khoen  
Assisted by: Staff: County Attorney - Herb Thiele

- Jimmie McDaniel - talked about the electrical substation that the City is planning to put on Welaunee. His western boundary is along that property line and the substation will be within 50-100 feet from his house. He noted there are no other substations around residential areas in the County and the Florida Real Estate Commission considers a substation going through a neighborhood a health hazard. He stated that the substation could be build one-half mile from his house rather than 100 feet of his home which would devalue his property.
- **Commissioner Grippa recommended the County Attorney write a letter informing the City of the County's objection to the placement of the substation, since it is a health hazard.**

Staff: County Attorney- Herb Thiele

- **Commissioner Grippa also suggested the County meet with the City regarding the Welaunee project, noting that residents in Lafayette Oaks and Midyette are concerned.**

Staff: Growth & Environmental Development(GEM)/Support Services - Gary Johnson/Scott Ross

- Mr. McDaniel also advised that he has a flooding problem. All the water from Hill 'n' Dale Estates from Chaires Crossroads comes down toward U.S. 90 and drains north. During a 5-6 inch rainfall, it runs down to his property line.
- **Commissioner Rackleff directed staff talk with Mr. McDaniel to obtain some details and attempt to resolve the problem.**

Staff: GEM/Environmental Compliance - Gary Johnson/John Kraynak  
Public Works/Engineering - Tony Park/Joe Brown

- Richard Shone stated he spoke to the Chairman prior to the meeting regarding the amount of traffic that is backing up on Mahan Drive westbound in the morning. He explained and the engineering issues that may surround the dedicated left hand turn that it is very frustrating to have to wait 2-4 traffic lights between 7:30-7:45 a.m. to get through Capital Circle and felt that engineering issues may resolve the problem.

Staff: Public Works/Engineering - Tony Park/Joe Brown

- Ms. Marcia Sutherland presented a history of the flooding problems at her home. In 1989, she purchased a piece of property that had a 4" X 4" ditch next to it. Over a 12-year period due to development in the area and stormwater runoff, the ditch widened to approximately 15 feet deep and tripled in width, exposing the water line to her home. Through the years, various measures have been attempted to control the erosion and now she gets 4 feet of water runoff from Clifford

Hill Cemetery, Lonnie Road and Maggie Lane.

In March 2003 concrete was poured for a retaining wall that cost \$30,000, landscaping cost \$10,000 and \$10,000 was spent on asphalt to repair her driveway. When additional concrete was needed to secure the southern end of the wall, she applied for a County permit, and told that the cost would be approximately \$10,000 and that environmental studies would need to be done, at the homeowners expense. She stated that she has asked for the County's help numerous times to no avail. She asked for an amendment to her permit to include a statement from William Adams of Allen Nobles & Associates, Inc. P.E, that the water flow is not being increased, there is no increase in the velocity for small rains, and, in fact, there will be a decrease in the runoff by slowing down the water. She received a notice of violation/stop-work order only two weeks ago and she applied for the permit five months ago.

- John Kraynak, Environmental Compliance Director, responded to the issues raised.
- There was Board discussion.
- **Commissioner Thael requested that staff bring back an agenda item, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, if possible, to include an analysis of the situation and what the County can do to ameliorate the financial costs to the homeowner and solve the flooding problem.**
- **Commissioner Grippa stated that the owners are willing to pay for the actual work but not the studies. The Board directed staff to include a proposal for the County to conduct the study with the County's resources and waive the permit fees.**
- Mr. Kraynak explained that his office could not conduct the study since it is issuing the permit. **Mr. Joe Brown, Public Works, indicated that they would bring back an agenda item for Board consideration and Ms. Sutherland's consultant is consultant is under contract with the County and they could conduct the study if the Board so desires.**

Staff: Public Works/Engineering - Tony Park/Joe Brown  
GEM/Environmental Compliance - Gary Johnson/John Kraynak

- Phil Sutherland stated his wife had explained the situation. He voiced his concerns about the extreme flooding condition that occurs when it rains and he did not mind paying additional taxes as long as the money is used to wisely.
- Paul Downing raised the question that when the engineers designed the Buck Lake Road improvements, from Mahan Road to Pedrick, why didn't they make it four lanes the entire way. He noticed that there was not much traffic turning off of Buck Lake Road between Davis and Mahan, but a lot of traffic turning off at Pedrick north and southbound and the other subdivisions east of Davis Road?
  - Mr. Joe Brown explained that the road was not configured for four lanes for the entire run because of the results of the PD & E study which was conducted by the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). Public Works determined, based on the projected traffic volume, it was not essential and the neighborhood asked that it not be four-lane if it did not have to be. The County could not justify the expenditure for right-of-way at this time.
  - Mr. Downing also asked the Board not permit any more subdivisions between Pedrick Road and Chaires Crossing because the traffic is already congested. He stated that he was willing to pay additional taxes for the four-lanes and urged the Board to plan ahead.

- John King spoke about the importance of citizens becoming involved. He noted that it is difficult for citizens to make an impact on issues involving the City and suggested that the County create an electronic publication to inform, through email, strategies and ways that citizens could be effective and make an impact on the City/County issues. He asked if this idea would be feasible.
- Commissioner Rackleff reminded citizens that a conflict resolution meeting with City Commissioners about the CRA and annexation issues. He has worked with City staff regarding the power line alignment and believes it will be placed on Mahan Drive and not Buck Lake Road. **Commissioner Rackleff pointed out that staff has been active in using the County's website to provide citizens with County information and issues and will look into this suggestion.**

Staff: Public Services/Intergovernmental Affairs - Vince Long/Jennie Khoen  
Management Services/MIS - Kim Dressel/Pat Curtis

- Patrick Detscher - as former CAC Chairman, he suggested that the Buck Lake Road Project start at Pedrick Road, where the most kids live.
- John Dew presented his concerns:
  - Flooding coming from Welaunee
  - Siting of the electric transmission line and hopefully, a portion of it will be buried
  - Future commercial development and its traffic impact (particularly Fallschase development)
  - Using Revision 7 monies for funding the County EMS; if Blueprint 2000 money is available to addressing flooding and septic tank problems in Killearn Lakes, that it also be used to solve the flooding in Buck Lake area
  - Concerned that Highway 90 East, if widened, will end up looking like Highway 90 West
- Kent Wimmer requested the Board look closely at the bike and pedestrian plan of Alford Arm Greenway so that neighbors can get around.
  - Commissioner Rackleff responded that very little is planned for Alford Arm because it is intended to be a passive park/open space. The strategic plan for the park for next year includes security and parking; in the next 3-4 years, the grant monies will be matched for board walks, observation pier, eco-system enhancements, and restrooms.
- Jenny Broch stated that citizens have to look towards the State and local governments to protect the water bodies. She thanked the Board for their efforts regarding this matter.
- Richard Redemann - stated that a lot of water comes to his area from Miccosukee Canopy Greenway area and Lafayette Oaks. He also advised that on Edenfield Road, there are some ditches but there are no stormwater ponds to catch the water. He indicated that it was better to purchase land now rather than purchasing homes later when it floods.
  - Commissioner Thael explained that staff is working closely with the Welaunee Plantation Powerhouse Corporation and there is a proposal expanding the existing Dove Pond and creating some berms to contribute to protection of properties.
  - **Tony Park, Director of Public Works, explained that as it goes through the development process, it would be discussed further.**

Staff: Public Works/Engineering - Tony Park/Joe Brown

- Lucy Lee - regarding installation of sidewalks and their maintenance. She asked that as Buck Lake Road is being widened to keep in mind that additional subdivisions are being built and the increased traffic congestion that will occur on Pedrick and Buck Lake Road. She urged the Board to plan ahead.
- **Commissioner Rackleff asked that County staff contact the City about the sidewalk maintenance (mowing, cracks, etc) problem in the area and coordinate with City on traffic issues.**

Staff: Public Works/Transportation - Tony Park/Sally Dowlen

- Rosie Smith urged the Board to coordinate the permitting of new subdivisions and construction of roads in the area and consider signals for right and left turn lanes and to coordinate with the City of Tallahassee regarding Pedrick Road; traffic calming devices are not helpful and the speed limit on Buck Lake Road is not adhered to.

Staff: Public Works/ Engineering/Transportation - Tony Park/Joe Brown/Sally Dowlen

#### **Discussion Items by Commissioners**

- The Commissioners thanked citizens, Wakulla County residents and Commissioner Nettles for attending.

**Adjourn:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:14 p.m.